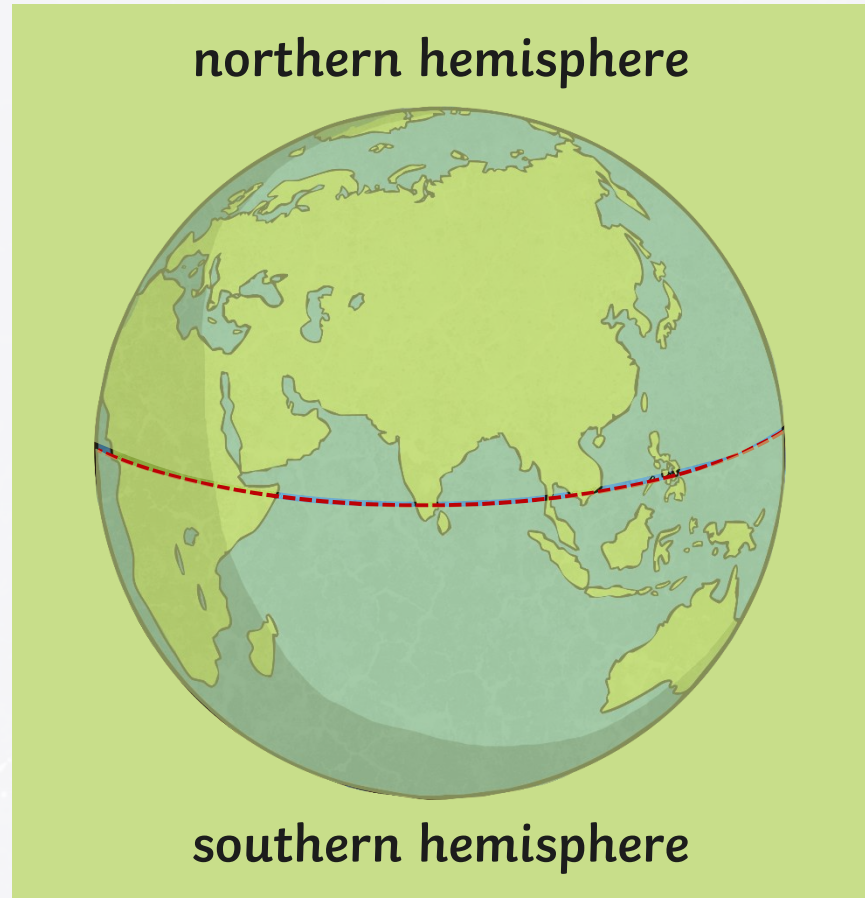


Our World

Around the middle of the Earth, there is an invisible line called the equator.

Countries above the equator are in the northern hemisphere and countries below the equator are in the southern hemisphere.



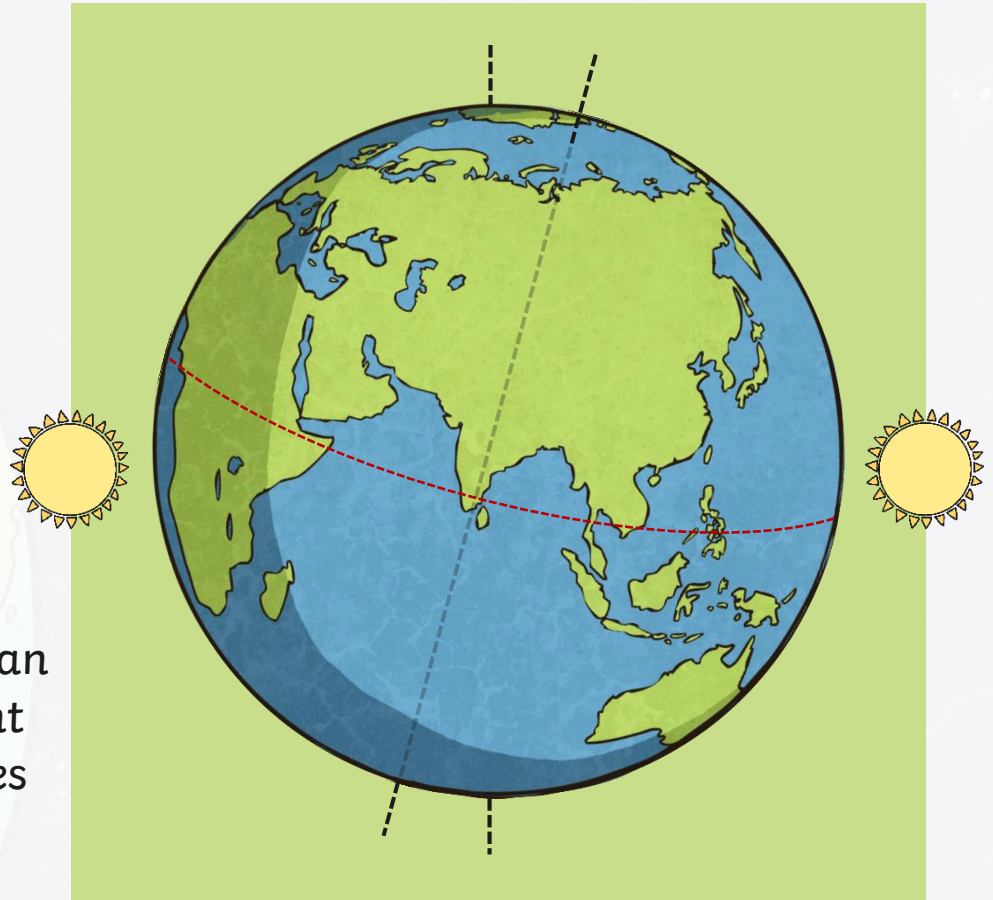
Earth and Sun

The Earth orbits (moves around) the Sun, which takes one year.

The Earth has an axis like a long pole that it is spinning around.

The axis is not straight; it is tilted over.

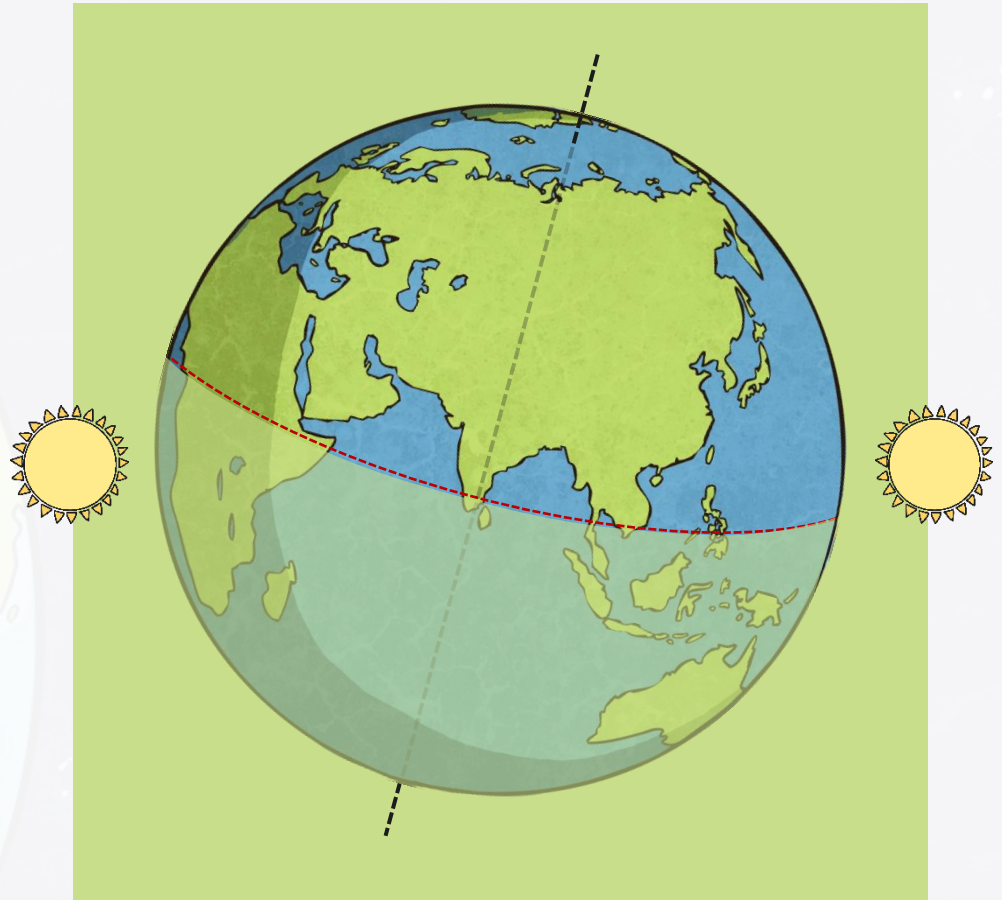
The way the Earth leans at an angle means that at different times of the year some places on Earth are nearer to the Sun than others.



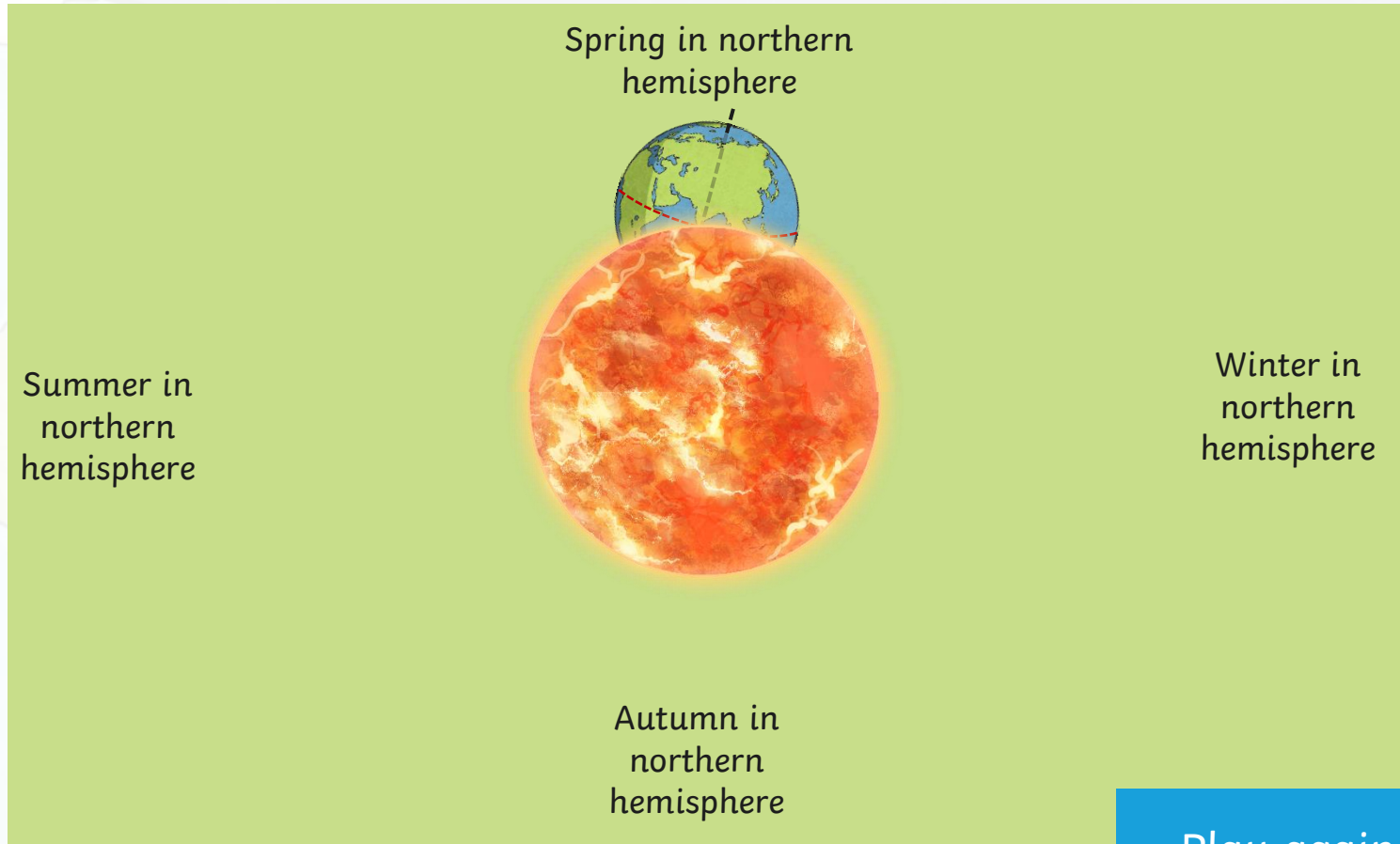
Earth and Sun

If you live in the northern hemisphere (above the equator), Earth is tilted closer to the Sun in the summer, getting more light and heat.

It is further away from the Sun in the winter and so countries in the northern hemisphere receive less light and heat.



Earth and Sun



Play again

What Is the Summer Solstice?



The Summer Solstice marks the change when the days begin to grow shorter.

The Winter Solstice marks the change when days begin to grow longer.

The word 'solstice' is a Latin word which means 'sun stand still'. During the solstice, the Sun appears to stay still in the sky for a few days before and after.

What Is the Summer Solstice?



The Summer Solstice begins around June 21st. This is also known as the first day of summer and the longest day of the year. On this day, there is the most amount of daylight. On this day, the sun rises around 4:45a.m. and sets around 9:30p.m.

What Happens in the Arctic?



Due to the fact that the Arctic is at the top of the Earth and during the summer it is tilted towards the Sun, there is 24-hour-daylight in the Arctic at this time.

Imagine that!

Solstice Celebrations

Both Summer Solstice and Winter Solstice have been celebrated around the world for centuries.

People celebrated the Summer Solstice as they were being thankful for the Sun. Early people did worry that the Sun would not come back during the darker months.



Solstice Celebrations

Just imagine what it was like before the days of electricity during the dark months of winter. It would certainly be a cause for celebration to see the Sun around for longer again in the summer.



Photo courtesy of ruraltourism360 (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence – attribution

Solstice Celebrations



At Stonehenge, druids and other people gather to celebrate the Summer Solstice because the light of the sun lines up exactly with the stone circle.



Pagans call the festival 'Litha' and celebrate the power of the Sun with bonfires.

Photo courtesy of ruraltourism360 (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence – attribution